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LCA Literature

Eco-Factors BUWAL 297 (ecological scarcity) and Eco-Indicator 95 Weighting Factors for widely used Life Cycle Inventories

ÖBU (Swiss Association for Environmentally Conscious Management) publishes a compendium of all inventory parameters reported in three frequently used LCA inventory studies, together with their appropriate weighting factors in two well-known impact assessment (LCIA) methods. The brochure, developed together with EMPA St. Gall and Infras Zurich, lists and comments the parameters from the following Life Cycle Inventories: Energy Systems (ETH-ESU, 1996), Packaging (BUWAL 250, 1996, and Transports (INFRAS, 1995). Weighting factors are given for the method of ecological scarcity (Eco-factors BUWAL 297) and Eco-indicator 95. The list of factors goes far beyond the original LCIA publications, since every inventory parameter occurring in the inventories is discussed, and a rationale for its weighting factor given (where applicable).

This correlation tool between inventories and impact assessment methods will facilitate and improve LCA work by

- Guidance to LCA practitioners for the interpretation of inventory results. The six correlation tables correspond exactly to the parameter lists in the respective inventories, so that the weighting factors can be directly introduced.
- Standardization of the weighting factors for all occurring inventory parameters, which enhances the transparence of LCIA and contributes to a better comparability of results.

The brochure does not contain any inventory data (which can be found in the original publications). Also, it does not attempt to define "*optimal*" parameter lists for any LCA application, or prescribe which inventory items should be collected to obtain meaningful results (e.g. for the inventory of a company or production site). It is partially based on results derived from the new study BUWAL 300 (Schriftenreihe SRU Nr. 300) on the impact assessment in packaging LCAs, which will be soon available from the Swiss Packaging Institute SVI, Brückfeldstr. 18, Postfach, CH-3000 Bern 26.

The ÖBU publication "Zuordnung der Ökofaktoren 97 und der Gewichtungsfaktoren aus Eco-Indicator 95 zu wichtigen Standard-Inventaren" (in German), including a diskette with all tables (Excel 5.0) was published in September 1998 and can be ordered now (price CHF 145.-, ÖBU and SVI members, university students or faculty CHF 95.-). An English version of the tables (also Excel 5.0) is currently developed and will be available soon.

Ordering information: Swiss Association for Environmentally Conscious Management, Obstgartenstr. 28, CH-8035 Zurich/ Switzerland, phone: +41-1-364-37-38, fax +41-1-364-37-11, e-mail: oebuinfo@oebu.ch